[English]

Privatisation of Telecom Sector

1128. SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to privatise the Telecom Sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government are aware that the New Telecom policy will adversely affect the Telecom Department and its Employees; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to safeguard the interest of the Telecom Department and its employees?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b). The participation of private sector has been permitted in providing the Basic Telephone Services, the Value Added Services and also in the manufacture of telecom equipment.

(c) and (d). The new Telecom Policy is not likely to have any adverse effect on the telecom department and its employees. However, the department has already taken steps to induct state of-art technology equipment into its network and has also embarked upon extensive training plan to upgrade the skills and expertise of DOT employees.

[Translation]

Pending Projects of Uttar Pradesh

1129. SHRI SONTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether a number of proposals relating to the promotion of tourism of Uttar Pradesh are lying pending with the Union Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which these proposals are likely to be cleared by the Union Government?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : (a) to (c). Each year the Department of Tourism in consultation with State Govt. officials prioritises projects for central financial assistance. The funds for these projects are released on receipt of detailed project proposals. Six project proposals have been recently received from Uttar Pradesh Govt.

Linking of Bulandshahar with Lucknow by Rail

1130. SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to link Bulandshahar with Lucknow by railway line directly;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the Government have received some representations in this regard during the last three years and current year so far; and

(e) if so, the steps taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (c). Bulandshahr is already connected to Lucknow via Khurja-Kanpur as well as via Hapur-Moradabad.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise

Scheme for Air Cargo Services

1131. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have formulated any scheme for according priority to air cargo services and for making them economically viable and self-sufficient;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any seminar regarding air cargo was organised in September, 1996;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the issues discussed at the seminar regarding air cargo services alongwith the conclusions thereof; and

(f) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government on the suggestions?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b). Airlines both in the public and private sectors have shown interest in increasing cargo business. The Government's "Open Sky Policy" regarding cargo gives adequate incentives to the airlines to make the cargo operations financially viable.

(c) to (e). Yes, Sir. The subjects discussed in the Air-Cargo 96 conference organised by the Institute of Engineers (India), Delhi State Centre, were market evaluation and its effect on air cargo, Air cargo infrastructure, the challenges of 2000 and beyond for Indian Aviation, the challenges/opportunities and responsibilities to promote trade by air, joint venture of cargo terminals, planning a cargo airline, the use of modern single engine aircraft for air cargo operations, and cargo airline management system.

(f) These suggestions are mainly for the airlines. Regarding infrastructure Airports Authority of India is providing adequate cargo handling facilities at all airports.